



THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

SEP 1 2009

The Honorable Peter Hoekstra
Ranking Member
Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Hoekstra:

Thank you for your letters dated August 13, 2009 and August 19, 2009.

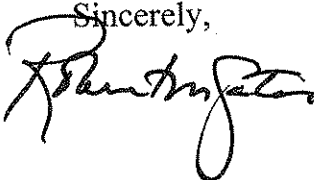
In the letters you expressed a desire to lead a delegation of Michigan officials and members of the press to visit the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. You also expressed frustration over not being informed on developments regarding relocating detainees to the United States. I understand your frustration, and appreciate your request, and the opportunity to address your concerns.

I'd like to respond first to your most recent letter. In accordance with the January 22, 2009 Executive Orders, the Department of Defense is working with departments and agencies across the U.S. Government to conduct a comprehensive review of our detention policy and to develop a plan for closure of the Guantanamo detention facilities. The Attorney General is coordinating this ongoing review, which is considering all appropriate courses of action. While I understand your frustration with the process and inconsistent flow of information, please know that no final decisions have been made. When the interagency task force completes its review and the President approves a decision regarding plans for the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facilities, we will provide Congress with a plan for the detainees.

Regarding the contents of your first letter, as a member of Congress you are always welcome to visit Guantanamo, as you have in the past, to tour the facilities and to receive a briefing. We are happy to accommodate you whenever your schedule permits. In addition, members of the press may go through the traditional channels to visit Guantanamo. However, at this stage it may be premature to have local officials visit until a final decision is made. As you know, the President's task force is seriously reviewing a number of options, including Standish, for relocating detainees in an effort to close Guantanamo. When we have a clear idea of where the detainees will be relocated, we will be sure to engage state and local officials and their representatives in Congress.



The Department of Defense recognizes the important oversight role of the Congress during wartime, including oversight of the process to close Guantanamo. Please feel free to contact Ms. Elizabeth L. King, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, for assistance in visiting Guantanamo or to receive answers to any further questions.

Sincerely,


cc:

The Honorable Silvestre Reyes

The Honorable Ike Skelton

The Honorable John Boehner

The Honorable Howard P. "Buck" McKeon